

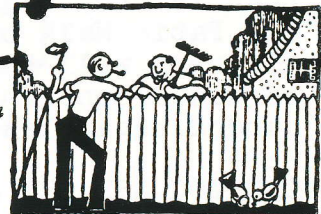


The Garden Spray

BULLETIN OF THE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS, INC.

Member--Men's Garden Clubs of America • Minnesota State Horticultural Society

March 1982, Volume 40, Number 3



Here it is, BACK AGAIN BY POPULAR REQUEST
(Isn't that the way they say it?)

The MGCA MEETING in conjunction with THE DAYTON-BACHMAN FLOWER SHOW

THE DATE: Thursday March 25 (Note the changed day and week.)

THE PLACE: Dayton's Skyroom, Minneapolis downtown store. (Store will be open.) This will be a private dinner for MGCM members, their wives and guests, featuring Teriyaki Chicken Breast with all the trimmings.

THE PROGRAM: Our speaker will be Fred Glasoe, who will give a slide presentation of his visit to Holland in tulip time while he was teaching in West Germany.

THE PRICE: \$7.50 per person

THE TIME: 6:00 PM

-- BY RESERVATION ONLY --

RESERVATIONS MUST BE IN BY MONDAY, MARCH 22ND AND SHOULD BE MAILED WITH YOUR CHECK BEFORE THAT TIME. FILL IN THE RESERVATION FORM AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS PAGE AND MAIL TO:

George McCollough, Treasurer, 8812 Tretbough Drive, Bloomington, MN, 55431

NEWS

February 9, following petition from members and Board recommendation, Otto Nelson and Edgar Lehman were made honorary members of MGCM. Otto has been an active participant in club affairs for over 20 years. "Dick", a professional grower, has during his 35 years membership made many contributions to the club.

Former MGCM secretary and president, René Dufourd, died on Christmas day at his home in Florida. René, while a Minneapolis resident, had also held many committee chairmanships in MGCM.

RESERVATION(S) FOR MGCM MEETING THURSDAY EVENING MARCH 25

Return this form with your check payable to MGCM to
George McCollough, 8812 Tretbough Drive, Bloomington, MN, 55431

I plan to attend. Reserve _____ place(s) for me (\$7.50 each)

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

Your Signature _____

My Guest(s) will be _____

THIS AND THAT

Bill Hull, wintering in Tucson, Arizona, writes, "I've attended meetings of both the Tucson MGC and the Green Valley MGC. Both are fine, going clubs, and it has been pleasurable.... Green Valley is a new, young club that is very aggressive and active. They have started an Annual Garden and Patio Walk of ten or more gardens for which they sell \$3 tickets and did very well their first year, 1981. This year they are deluged with requests concerning its timing and from people who want their garden included regardless of membership in the club"

DID YOU SEE the article about the MGCA in the Mpls Sunday Tribune, Home & Garden Section, February 7th? The article was credited to the Associated Press. How much better it would have been though, if there had been a paragraph referring to our Club and the Mpls Club! --Stan Crist in Gardening in Minnetonka. We agree, Stan.

Sherman Pinkham gets out a monthly letter "to E & I Committee and other key MGCA members" giving the current status of the Endowment Fund (As of January 31 it amounted to \$125,916.13 up \$3408.13 from December). His typically Sherm cover letter for January reads,

"Enclosed is our E & I January 31, 1982 statement.

It shows a modest gain over a month ago.

Life Memberships continue to come in, also Memorials.

We are sticking to our goal of \$200,000.00 by 1986.
It can be reached. Everybody push.

Our slogan remains "THINK ENDOWMENT".

The Minneapolis snowmobilers have bumper stickers "Think Snow".
It has paid off in a big way this year.

MGCA IS ON THE WAY. SEE YOU AT TOLEDO."

Maybe you could get the snowmobilers to promote those green jackets, Sherm.

CUCUMBERS TO BE EATEN LIKE APPLES

by Bill Hull

"Streamliner" hybrid cucumber, new for 1981, is one about which I can very easily get enthusiastic. Any cuke which I can peel and eat at garden or room temperature with no after-effects deserves rave notices. And this one qualifies.

It was five weeks between visits to my cukes and tomatoes--four weeks in the hospital and one week before I could hobble up the slope. The cukes were all long and looked overgrown but I had to try one anyway. They were delicious--even up to a foot in length. "Streamliner", a new Burpee introduction, is a gynocious (all female) compact vined hybrid variety. It's medium green fruits are normally 9-1/2 to 10-1/2 inches long with a gradual tapered shape. The seed cavity is small so there's lots of solid eating. When the fruits reach twelve inches, the seeds begin to ripen and should be cut out but that's no problem. Claimed to be mosaic and mildew proof and certainly no sign of either in my small patch. It takes only a little space and is worth noting for 1982.



Thoughts From the Gazebo

The month of March sometimes can be a very snowy period of the year, and no doubt a record very may be set this year in regard to total snowfall. The only way around my backyard now is by snowshoe, and without them, the pruning of the fruit trees would have been impossible.

Our March meeting this month will be on the 25th, when members and their guests will have a chance to discard the "winter blahs" by having the opportunity to dine at Daytons and than view the fantastic gardens created by Bachmans. You and your guests will be inspired by the many ideas shown at the Daytons/ Bachman Flower Show. Help make this evening a truly gala event by planning on attending. See the front page of this issue of the Spray for the details.

If you are growing your own bedding plants, there is still time during the first two weeks of March to seed some of the popular annuals such as petunias, snapdragons, impatiens, and dusty miller. If you drench the seeding medium with a solution of Benomyl fungicide ($\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon per gallon of water) you will have a good chance of preventing "damping off" from occurring. After your seeding medium is thoroughly drenched with this solution, allow it to drain for about two hours, this will prevent the medium from being too wet. This preventitive treatment works well and is appropriate when seeding either flower or vegetable seeds.

Jerry Shannon

We welcome new members, so bring a garden friend with you to join in a fine gardening program and good fellowship.

SEEDS, SEEDS, SEEDS AT FEBRUARY MGCM MEETING
by Andy Marlow

With most good gardeners pouring over their newly arrived seed catalogs looking for new and better varieties, February was an ideal time to hear about seeds from an expert. Bruce Johnstone is a former MGCM member and is retired Chief Horticulturist at Northrup King. Bruce was in charge of selecting and purchasing all of NK's flower seed, and he gave us an inside look at the business.

Seeds are very important, said Johnstone, not just to grow new plants every season, but because most carbohydrate foods consumed by people are seeds. That includes the cereal grains and legumes among others. In fact, he said, a pound of seed is potentially a ton of food. For that reason throughout history people have carried seed with them as they have migrated from place to place.

A seed is nothing more than the fertilized ovule of a plant and comes in two types: those from gymnosperm plants, whose seeds are naked (pines are an example); and those from angiosperm plants, whose seeds are produced inside fruits. Johnstone reminded members that "fruit" is a very general term. It is literally a mature fertilized ovary of the plant. Fruit ranges from apples, tomatoes, beans and so on to the grains, where the ovary is so thin it fuses to the seed coat and virtually disappears. All angiosperm seeds contain an embryo plant, food to nurture it and a seed coat.

The most important fact about seed, Johnstone said, is that it is sexually produced using a combination of genes from two parents. That fact allows humans to manipulate the characteristics of the plant to produce bigger or hardier plants, more fruit, different colored flowers, etc.

If this makes you think that seeds are very much alike, you've been misled. Johnstone says that seeds are variable in more ways than they are alike. They vary in size from microscopic to 40 or 50 pounds for a particular variety of palm growing in the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean. The size of seeds, though, bears no relation to the eventual size of the plant produced.

Seed also varies in texture, moisture content, time of germination and length of viability. The latter is one of the most important considerations for the seedsman. He must keep the seed alive until it is planted and has a chance to germinate. Moisture is the biggest enemy of viability and many seeds now come vacuum-packed in a moisture-tight container to extend seed life.

Growing flower seed, particularly the hybrids that have revolutionized horticulture, is no easy task, even in such pleasant surroundings as California. Pollination must be controlled. Many flowers must be fertilized by hand. Hybrids must be rebred each time so as to not lose the qualities that make that plant desirable. And, harvesting the often minuscule seeds while maintaining purity and moisture content is also a tricky business. All this involves a lot of expensive hand labor. Next time you look at a seed catalog and gasp at the price of a particularly beautiful or hardy hybrid, remember all the work that went into creating and maintaining those qualities and the care and effort involved in producing that little packet we buy each spring.

(continued page 5)

Johnstone noted that flower seed production is small compared to vegetable seed production. He said there are only about 25 to 30 important flower seed growers in the whole world. Many are in Costa Rica or are overseas, in Southern Europe, Holland, Africa (particularly Kenya and Morocco). In the U.S., most of the growing takes place near the coast of California from Santa Barbara up to Salinas. Seeds from cool weather flowers are grown closest to the coast; from warmer weather plants farther inland. The Lompoc Valley, just north of Santa Barbara, is one of the most important growing areas.

Johnstone concluded his talk with slides of that region. Vast fields of blooming marigolds, zinnias, petunias, ageratum, alyssum and other flowers. The final slide, which he called "a commercial", was a photo of his own garden showing that he can do more with seeds than merely talk about them.

VOLUNTEER!

Fred Glasoe, introduced at the February MGCM meeting as chairman of an ad hoc committee working on the Minnesota Horticultural Society's Mission 125 set for this coming May at Landmark Center in St. Paul, gave a fine promotional talk. He told your editor the MINNESOTA HORTICULTURIST would have a listing of openings for volunteers and that men, especially, would be needed. We planned to copy from the list; but no listing appeared in the January HORTICULTURIST so we'll have to say, "Watch for your next HORTICULTURIST".

Dr. De Vos did, however, supply the SPRAY with a detailed listing of volunteer openings at the Arboretum. He says, "We need you! Your enthusiasm, talents and willingness to lend a hand can make the difference as we try to keep current levels of programming, public service and grounds maintenance in the face of shrinking budgets. Please check the "job listings". Get involved directly in the work of the Arboretum."

Assistant in Display Gardens - Assist gardener with maintenance of annual and perennial display areas. Hours: 4-16 hours/month on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30, anytime between April 1 and September 30. Orientation Monday March 22nd, 10 a.m. Contact Michael Heger, 443-2460.

Assistant in the Children's Garden - Assist instructor with children ages 8-12 who are planting their own vegetables. Hours: 2-8 hours/month on Saturdays in April & May, AND/OR 2-8 hours/month on weekdays June-August. Orientation Saturday April 17, 9:30 a.m. Contact Sandy Tanck, 443-2460.

Grounds Assistant - Assist gardener with maintenance of azaleas, old fashioned rose garden, hedge collection or groundcover collection. Hours: 8 hours/month minimum, weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Starting date, May 17. Contact Peter Moe, 443-2459 and leave message.

Wildflower Garden Volunteer - Assist with the maintenance of the woodland wildflower garden. Hours: 2 hrs/week minimum, Monday through Thursday between 7 a.m. and noon starting in mid-April. Call 443-2460 and leave message for Jan Norman.

Bus Tour Guides - Lead groups of adults along the arboretum drive. Must be familiar with the arboretum plantings and like working with adults. Hours: minimum of 6 hrs/month, weekdays, between 9 a.m. and 3:30. Call Linda Sanford, 443-2460 for training information.

PICK ORNAMENTAL PEPPER FOR PERFORMANCE

The ornamental pepper performs as well in the garden as it does in a pot. This highly colored species has been winning awards in recent years, for new shapes, increased fruit production and overall adaptability to climate across the country.

The 1980 All-America medalist, 'Holiday Time', fruits early in pots and adds a unique note to home-garden plantings as a border plant. The dwarf plants, growing to a maximum height of 8 to 9 inches, provide a series of interesting colors, as peppers change from yellow, to orange to purple and finally a fiery red.

'Red Missile' is another new F₁ hybrid ornamental pepper variety. The tapered 2-inch fruit are not only attractive, they are also usable for seasoning after they have been removed from the plant and dried.

The ornamental pepper is a tough plant. Put them in a hot, dry location and watch them thrive. Pick a background which will highlight the varied fruit colors.

Ornamental peppers also bring new life to hanging-basket displays. Their compact habit, vivid fruit and hardiness offer limitless opportunities for creative and colorful uses in hanging gardens and containers of all kinds. A sunny window box takes on new life when planted with 'Red Missile' and vinca vine.

Seeds for ornamental peppers may be started indoors 8 to 12 weeks before anticipated outdoor planting.

BRING A VISITOR. GET A NEW MEMBER.

Return to
THE GARDEN SPRAY of MGCM, INC.
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